

## READINGS BOOKLET



GRADE 12  
DIPLOMA EXAMINATION

English 33

Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

January 1991

**Alberta**  
EDUCATION

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**GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION  
ENGLISH 33**

**Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice)**

**READINGS BOOKLET**

**DESCRIPTION**

Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice) contributes 50% of the total English 33 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 70 questions in the Questions Booklet and eight reading selections in the Readings Booklet.

**TOTAL TIME:** 2 hours

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- **Be sure that you have an English 33 Questions Booklet and an English 33 Readings Booklet.**
- You may **NOT** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

**JANUARY 1991**



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- I. Questions 1 to 8 in your Questions Booklet are based on the story “The Kittlings” by John Patrick Gillese, contemporary Alberta playwright and writer.

## THE KITTLINGS

Just as some men are purebred chicken fanciers and others have a shrewd eye for good horseflesh, my father had a talent for buying, trading or otherwise getting stuck with the most temperamental, bizarre and highly individualistic farm animals I have ever encountered.

- 5 Lured by reports of the freedom and fortune to be had in the Canadian West, he left Ireland for an Alberta homestead in 1926. By the middle of the great depression, he had acquired — in addition to a more fatalistic philosophy of life — a number of what I can only describe as, for want of a better word, eccentric animals.

- 10 One was a big-boned Jersey that would eat rhubarb — the only cow I ever heard of that would. Our best workhorse was a Clydesdale with tender feet — the only horse with tender feet I ever heard of, too. He was ideal for work in the fields but hated to walk down the black bushland roads to town.

- 15 My father even had an odd-coloured cat — somewhat the shade of a turtle shell. Possessing a great Irish brogue till the day he died, my father called her “Turtle.”

- It is of her I write, for while the other animals were providers and helpmates, Turtle was — well, different: one of the few amenities of life in a new land. She was something to take my father’s mind off the stumps that were so hard to clear, the mosquitoes that boiled out of the moist slough grass in mid-summer, the hail that hung from brassy skies over the wheat crops, the prosperity that never did turn the range-line road up to our homestead door.

- 20 Father’s original idea, when he first brought Turtle home, was to have a cat around the barn to catch mice. Unfortunately, Turtle hated to get her paws wet, muddy or cold. Consequently, she took first to sleeping on the old Jersey in the winter nights, then to riding around on the Jersey’s back. I need hardly remark that she was the only cat I ever saw riding a cow.

- I believe that even in the animal world eccentrics attract other eccentrics and that Jersey was really eccentric. If you yelled at her, she would stop chewing her cud, gulp, then stand there, broken-hearted. She wouldn’t let her milk down till her great cow heart had been reassured of human love once more. She then became so used to my father’s milking that she wouldn’t let anyone else touch her udder. As old age crept up on her, she got even more temperamental: she wouldn’t let go of her milk at all unless Turtle was purring on her back. Whenever milking time came, you would always see my father and Turtle heading for the barn together, Turtle with her tail up in the air, my father with a pail in his hand.

- 35 As if knowing how monotonous milking got for us boys, Turtle would, when her Jersey friend was stripped,<sup>1</sup> spring lightly down onto the warm straw of the barn and sit approximately four feet from us, with open mouth.

- 40 This was our cue to try squirting milk into her mouth — a practice of which my frugal father heartily disapproved. When this got too dull, we would try to hit her in the eye or ear, which would cause Turtle to back up until she was practically wedged between the Clydesdale’s hind feet. (The horse stalls were

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>stripped — most of the milk had been taken from the cow

45 opposite the cow stalls in our slab-roofed pioneer barn.) Old Pat — the Clydesdale — would turn around to see what was hitting him in the fetlocks<sup>2</sup> and for his inquisitiveness, often got a squirt of milk right in the eye. This made Old Pat as mad as a hatter, he would flatten his ears and shake his head as he burrowed into the manger, till the joy of greenfeed dispelled his irritation at being disturbed while eating.

50 Publicly, I don't like to say too much about this phase of growing up on a farm, especially since I am always telling the generation around me how seriously we took life with its grim responsibilities in those distant days. Back to the cats.

One day Turtle didn't show up for her evening siesta on the Jersey's back. In due course, we discovered she had five kittens, in a snug little hollow under  
55 the floor of the barn. This was bad — for Turtle.

"We have wasted more milk among them horses' legs," said my father, "than would've paid for this debt-ridden farm. I'm not going to have any more wasted. Them kittlings has gotta go. Frank, you drown them."

60 Frank, oldest of the three boys, protested as best he could. Then he went out to take a look at Turtle's family. He came back in and said he couldn't reach them under the floor of the barn. Anyway, he said, there was no rush. He'd do it as soon as they got their eyes open.

Turtle got so gaunt from feeding them that she would sit right behind us the moment we sat down to milk and hold her mouth open, mewling for milk.

65 "Dammit's soul," said my father, "can't you catch mice like other cats? What kind of cat are yez, anyway?"

Turtle would give him a little mew of politeness and open her mouth even wider. The performance annoyed, first, the Jersey who missed her old buddy the way a man misses his evening pipe; and, second, my father, who caught us trying  
70 to fatten Turtle up again, this time from a distance of several feet. He told Frank to drown the kittens as soon as we'd finished milking.

An hour after Jim and I took turns turning the separator, so we wouldn't have to watch Frank carrying the kittens down to the slough, I went outside. Frank was standing by the barn with a sack in his hand. He looked like the executioner.  
75 He beckoned me over. Being smaller, I knew what kind of beckon meant business. I went.

"You drown 'em," said Frank. "I have to paint the whiffletrees.<sup>3</sup> And now, before the old man blows up."

80 I went in and looked at Turtle's kittens. They were the wildest-looking, cutest-looking little rascals you ever saw, about four inches long, all with little tails that stood straight up in the air like Momma's. Turtle rubbed against my leg to show that her brood didn't really mean any offence the way they hissed and spat at me.

I went and got brother Jim. I handed him the sack.

85 "You drown those kittens," I said. "I gotta help Frank paint the whiffletrees. And right now."

Just before dusk, my father went out to see if the kittens were all "disposed of," as he put it, to my mother. Jim gave him the sack.

"You better drown 'em Dad," he said.

90 "Outta hell or ina hell," said my father, using his most exasperated Irish expression, "those boys are matchless. We've raised them to this time of life and they don't know how to drown five kittlings."

*Continued*

<sup>2</sup>fetlocks — tufts of hair just above the horse's hoof

<sup>3</sup>whiffletrees — horizontal crossbar that is attached to a wagon in order to pull it



“Ye’re best to do it yourself,” said my mother. “The like of this nonsense I’ve never heard of.”

95 She finally got father to concede he’d take care of it before going out to do the seeding the next morning.

The result was, we soon had five kittens lined up behind the horses’ heels waiting patiently for milking time, when we boys would faithfully squirt milk into their mouths. Pat and the other horses, who raised their ears and snorted in wonderment when the little kittens first came mewling down among their feet, 100 would turn around before moving position in the stall. And, by this time, the old Jersey got so maternal about it, she would look around out of great purple eyes to make sure the whole clan was assembled.

“Hurry up, you old brute,” my father would say. “Let your milk down.”

105 The Jersey would give a great sigh, start chewing her cud and blowing like a porpoise, and the zing of fresh milk hitting tin milkpails must surely have been music to those cats’ ears.

By fall, the five cats ringed around the milk stalls had increased to exactly twelve, seven of them stub-tailed and small. My father was desperate.

110 “Is a man to come to my time in life,” he wailed to my mother, “and not have wan son that would lift a hand for him? I declare, them cats are bankrupting us.”

Fortunately for my father — but unfortunately for the settlers south of us — that year was peculiar in more ways than one. For us, it was an exceptionally good growing year, especially where potatoes were concerned. The settlers to the 115 south, however, got hit first by hail, then by frost, and many of them were forced to apply for relief.

Those days you could scarcely sell wheat, let alone potatoes. We had so many potatoes, we couldn’t get a third of them into our cellar. My father let it be known that anyone hard up for potatoes could come to our place and load his 120 wagon box.

So they came, most of them people we’d never seen before. My father would insist they fill the wagon box and then go inside for a cup of tea, or dinner, before starting the slow wagon trip home again — perhaps 16 or 20 miles deep in the range-line country to the south.

125 Just before they were ready to drive off, profuse in their thanks, my father would send us boys out to hitch up their teams. Then he would busy himself at the back of their wagons, making sure the sacks were well tied for the rough journey home.

Years later, I remember my father meeting some of those settlers and the 130 great laugh that would erupt.

“Hey, Frank, you remember those spuds you gave me? Well, when I got home the old lady said they were movin’. We opened the bag and out jumped a cat. . . .”

135 Eleven cats jumped out in all — to eleven different homesteaders living in the bush.

“By gar, she was the funniest cat I ever see!” one fellow said to my father. “When I go to milk, she sit there like a dog, hees mout’ open. I tell her: Go catch mouse. Don’t sit there, making my cow nervous.”

I can’t be sure, but I suspect the cows got used to it.

*John Patrick Gillese*  
Alberta playwright and writer

II. Questions 9 to 15 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

FORGIVE MY GUILT

- Not always sure what things called sins may be,  
I am sure of one sin I have done.  
It was years ago, and I was a boy,  
I lay in the frostflowers with a gun,  
5 The air ran blue as the flowers, I held my breath,  
Two birds on golden legs slim as dream things  
Ran like quicksilver on the golden sand,  
My gun went off, they ran with broken wings  
Into the sea, I ran to fetch them in,  
10 But they swam with their heads high out to sea,  
They cried like two sorrowful high flutes,  
With jagged ivory bones where wings should be.
- For days I heard them when I walked that headland  
Crying out to their kind in the blue,  
15 The other plovers<sup>1</sup> were going over south  
On silver wings leaving these broken two.  
The cries went out one day; but I still hear them  
Over all the sounds of sorrow in war or peace  
I ever have heard, time cannot drown them,  
20 Those slender flutes of sorrow never cease.  
Two airy things forever denied the air!  
I never knew how their lives at last were spilt,  
But I have hoped for years all that is wild,  
Airy, and beautiful will forgive my guilt.

*Robert P. Tristram Coffin*  
American writer (1892-1955)  
best known for his poems  
about Maine, his native state

<sup>1</sup>plovers — shorebirds that live near lakes and sloughs



III. Questions 16 to 31 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the play *Butterflies Are Free*.

from BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE, Act I, Scene i

*The scene is DON BAKER's apartment on the top floor of a walk-up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. When the curtain rises, DON is leaning against one of the bedposts listening to a tape recorder. Suddenly, the noise of a conversational TV program is heard blaring in the next apartment. DON goes to the door that connects with the next apartment and raps angrily.*

**DON:** Hey, would you please . . . (*Knocking louder and shouting*) Would you mind lowering your radio? (*The TV program is turned off.*)

**JILL** (*Offstage*): Sorry, I couldn't hear you.

**DON:** I just wanted you to turn your radio down. You don't have to turn it off.  
5 Just lower it, please.

**JILL** (*Offstage*): I haven't got a radio. It's television.

**DON:** Well, whatever. These walls are made of paper.

**JILL** (*Offstage*): I know — Kleenex. How about a cup of coffee?

**DON:** No, thanks. I just had some.

10 **JILL** (*Offstage*): I meant for me.

**DON:** Sure . . . come on in. (*DON goes to the kitchen and turns on the flame under the coffee pot. There is a knock at the door as he takes a cup and saucer from the cupboard over the sink.*) It's open. (*JILL TANNER enters.*)

**JILL:** Hi! I'm Jill Tanner.

15 **DON** (*Turning toward her and extending his hand*): Don Baker. (*JILL shakes his hand.*)

**JILL:** I hope you don't mind me inviting myself in. Your living room is bigger than mine. How long have you been here?

**DON:** A month. This isn't the living room. This is the apartment. That's all there  
20 is except I have a big bathroom.

**JILL:** I've got three rooms if you count the kitchen. I just moved in two days ago, but I didn't sign a lease or anything — just by the month. Boy, you're neat. Everything is so tidy.

**DON:** It's easy when you haven't got anything.

25 **JILL** (*Looking around*): I haven't got anything, but it manages to wind up all over the place. I'm afraid I'm a slob. I've heard that boys are neater than girls. (*Looking up*) I like your skylight. I don't have that. (*Moves to the bed*) What's this?

**DON:** What?

30 **JILL:** This thing on stilts.

**DON:** Oh, my bed.

**JILL** (*Climbing the ladder*): Your bed? Wow! This is WILD!

**DON:** Do you like it?

**JILL** (*Climbing on the bed*): This is the greatest bed I've ever seen in my life.  
35 Did you build it?

**DON:** No, the guy who lived here before me built it. He was a hippie.

**JILL:** Suppose you fall out? You could break something.

*Continued*

- DON: You could break something falling out of any bed. (*He pours the coffee into the cup, goes to the coffee table and sets it down.*) Cream or sugar?
- 40 JILL: No, just black.
- DON: I could have had your apartment, but I took this one because of the bed.
- JILL: I don't blame you. (*Moving to the sofa*) May I ask you a personal question?
- DON: Sure.
- JILL: Have you got a job?
- 45 DON: Not yet . . . but I play the guitar, and I've got a few prospects.
- JILL: I heard you last night.
- DON: Sorry.
- JILL: No, it was good. First I thought it was a record till you kept playing one song over and over.
- 50 DON: I can't read music, so I have to learn by ear. I'm trying to put together an act.
- JILL: Then what?
- DON: Then I'll try to cash in on some of those prospects. I know one thing — I ain't a-goin' back to Scarsdale.
- 55 JILL: What is Scarsdale?
- DON: You don't know Scarsdale?
- JILL: I don't know much about the East. I'm from Los Angeles.
- DON: Scarsdale's just outside of New York — about twenty miles.
- JILL: Is that where you live?
- 60 DON: No, I live here. It's where I used to live.
- JILL: Scarsdale. It sounds like a sanitarium where they do plastic surgery. Is there any more coffee?
- DON (*Putting his cigarette out in the ashtray*): Plenty.
- JILL: I can get it.
- 65 DON (*Rises and holds out his hand for the cup*): I'm up. (*JILL hands him the cup. He goes to the kitchen to pour her more coffee.*) What did you say your name is?
- JILL: Jill Tanner. Technically, I guess I'm Mrs. Benson. I was married once . . . when I was sixteen.
- 70 DON: Sixteen! Did you have your parents' permission?
- JILL: My mother's. I told her I was pregnant, but I wasn't. She cried her eyes out. She hated the thought of becoming a grandmother.
- DON: How long were you married?
- JILL: It seemed like weeks! Actually, it was six days. (*She lights a cigarette.*)
- 75 It wasn't Jack's fault. It wasn't anybody's fault. It was just one of those terrible mistakes you make before you can stop yourself, even though you know it's a mistake while you're doing it.
- DON: What was he like?
- JILL: Jack? Oh . . . (*Uncomfortably*) I really can't talk about him.
- 80 DON: Then don't. I'm sorry.
- JILL: No, I will talk about him. Once in a while it's good for you to do something you don't want to do. It cleanses the insides. He was terribly sweet, but kind of adolescent, you know what I mean? Girls mature faster than boys. Boys are neater, but girls mature faster. When we met it was like fireworks and

*Continued*

85       rockets. I don't know if I'm saying it right, but it was a marvelous kind of passion that made every day like the Fourth of July. Anyway, the next thing I knew we were standing in front of a justice of the peace getting married.

**DON:** How long had you known him?

90       **JILL:** Two or three weeks, but I mean there we were getting *married!* I hadn't even finished high school and I had two exams the next day and they were on my mind, too. I heard the justice of the peace saying, "Do you, *Jack*, take Jill to be your lawfully wedded wife?" Can you imagine going through life as Jack and Jill? And then I heard "Till death do you part," and suddenly it wasn't a wedding ceremony. It was a funeral service. You know, that wedding ceremony is very morbid when you think about it. I hate anything morbid and there I was being buried alive . . . I wanted to run screaming out into the night!

**DON:** Did you?

100       **JILL:** I couldn't. It was ten o'clock in the morning. I mean you can't go screaming out into ten o'clock in the morning — so I passed out. If only I'd fainted before I said "I do."

**DON:** As long as you were married, why didn't you try to make it work?

**JILL:** I did try — believe me. (*She picks up an ashtray and holds it in her hand.*) I tried for six days, but I knew it was no good.

105       **DON:** Were you in love with him? (*DON flicks an ash from his cigarette onto the table where the ashtray had been before JILL moved it. JILL reacts to this fleetingly, and shrugs it off.*)

**JILL:** In my way.

**DON:** What's your way?

110       **JILL:** I don't know . . . Well, I think just because you love someone, that doesn't necessarily mean that you want to spend the rest of your life with him. But Jack loved me. I mean he really, really loved me, and I hurt him and that's what I can't stand. I just never want to hurt anybody. I mean marriage is a commitment, isn't it? I just can't be committed or involved. Can you understand?

115       **DON:** I understand, but I don't agree. (*DON flicks his ashes onto the table.*)

**JILL:** Then you don't understand really. (*JILL looks at him, oddly.*) What is this? Maybe I've got it wrong. Maybe boys mature faster and girls are neater.

**DON:** What do you mean?

**JILL:** Or maybe you know something I don't know — like ashes are good for the table? Is that why you keep dropping them there?

120       **DON:** Did you move the ashtray?

**JILL** (*Holding up the ashtray beside her*): It's right here. Are you blind?

**DON:** Yes.

**JILL:** What do you mean *yes*?

125       **DON:** I mean yes. I'm blind.

**JILL:** You're putting me on.

**DON:** No, I'm blind. I've always been blind.

**JILL:** Really blind? Not just near-sighted?

**DON:** The works. I can't see a thing. (*JILL leans over and runs her hands across DON's eyes. When he doesn't blink, she realizes he is indeed blind.*)

130       **JILL:** Oops! I hope I didn't say anything . . .

**DON:** Now, don't get self-conscious about it. I'm not.

*Continued*

JILL: Why didn't you tell me?  
 DON: I just did.

135 JILL: I mean when I came in.  
 DON: You didn't ask me.  
 JILL: Why would I ask? I mean I don't go into someone's house and say, "Hi, I'm Jill Tanner — are you blind?"

DON: Right. And I don't meet a stranger and say, "Hi, Don Baker — blind as a bat."

140 JILL: I think you should've told me. I would've told you.  
 DON: Well . . . I wanted to see how long it would take for you to catch on. Now you know. Do you want to run screaming out into the night or just faint?

145 JILL: How can you make jokes?  
 DON: Listen, the one thing that drives me up the wall is pity. I don't want it and I don't need it. Please — don't feel sorry for me. I don't feel sorry for me, so why should you?

JILL: You're so . . . adjusted.

150 DON: No, I'm not. I never *had* to adjust. I was born blind. It might be different if I'd been able to see and then went blind. For me, blindness is normal. I was six years old before I found out everyone else wasn't blind. By that time it didn't make much difference. So, let's relax about it. Okay? And if we can have a few laughs, so much the better.

155 JILL: A few laughs? About *blindness*?  
 DON: No, not about blindness. Can't you just forget that?  
 JILL: I don't know. You're the first blind person I've ever met.  
 DON: Congratulations. Too bad they don't give out prizes for that.

JILL: I've seen blind men on the street — you know, with dogs. Why don't you have a dog?

160 DON: They attract too much attention. I'd rather do it myself.  
 JILL: But isn't it rough getting around New York? It is for me!  
 DON: Not at all. I manage very well with my cane. I've got so I know exactly how many steps to take to the grocery . . . the laundry . . . the drugstore.

165 JILL: Where's a laundry? I need one.  
 DON: Next to the delicatessen. Forty-four steps from the front door.  
 JILL: I didn't see it.  
 DON: I'll show it to you.

JILL: What about here in the apartment? Aren't you afraid of bumping into everything? You could hurt yourself.

170 DON: I've memorized the room. (*Moves around the room with grace and confidence, calling off each item as he touches it or points to it*) Bed . . . bathroom . . . bookcase . . . guitar . . . my cane. (*He holds up the white aluminum walking stick, then puts it back on the shelf.*)

175 JILL: What are those books?  
 DON: Braille . . . Front door . . . tape recorder. (*Moving on*) Dining table . . . bathtub. (*Walks quickly to the chest of drawers against the door to JILL's apartment*) Chest of drawers. (*Touching the things on top*) Wine . . . glasses. (*He opens the top drawer.*) Linens. (*Closes the drawer; opens the front door and shuts it; moves on to the kitchen*) Kitchen . . . (*He opens the cabinet over the sink.*) Dishes . . . cups . . . glasses. (*He opens the*

180

Continued

next cabinet.) Coffee . . . sugar . . . salt and pepper . . . corn flakes . . . ketchup . . . etcetera. (*Returning to JILL*) Now, if you'll put the ashtray back. (*She replaces the ashtray on the table, and DON stamps out his cigarette in it. He sits on the sofa and holds out his arms with bravura.*) Voilà! If you don't move anything, I'm as good as anyone else.

185 **JILL:** Better. Gosh, I can't find anything in my place. The ketchup usually winds up in my stocking drawer and my stockings are in the oven. If you really want to see chaos, come and look at . . . (*She catches herself, self-consciously.*)

190 I mean . . . I meant . . .

**DON:** Relax. I'm no different from anyone else except that I don't see. The blindness is nothing. The thing I find hard to live with is other people's reactions to my blindness. If they'd only behave naturally. Some people want to assume guilt — which they can't because my mother has that market

195 cornered — or they treat me as though I were living in some Greek tragedy, which I assure you I'm not. Just be yourself.

**JILL:** I'll try . . . but I've never met a blind person before.

*Leonard Gershe*  
Contemporary American dramatist



IV. Questions 32 to 38 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the *Newsweek* magazine article "The Zap Generation."

from THE ZAP GENERATION

"The age a child starts to use the microwave has become a bragging point with moms — like tying shoes and telling time," says Delia Hammock, associate director of the Good Housekeeping Institute.

While the food industry busies itself with such innovations as the orange-flavored microwavable milkshake, however, questions are emerging about the safety of microwave cooking — especially when children are in charge.

"Parents let their kids use the microwave because they perceive it as safer than the stove," says Matthew P. Maley, director of risk management at the Shriners Burns Institute in Cincinnati, who has discovered a high incidence of minor burns among microwave-oven users.

"What happens is that a child is instructed how to do one thing in the microwave — for instance, heat a pastry. Then the child, all by himself, say, decides to try something else — say popcorn. He takes out the bag when it's done; the bag doesn't transmit heat, so he opens it close to his face and the vapor is 182 degrees."

Children have also been injured because they weren't on the lookout for what's come to be called the jelly-doughnut effect. Sugar heats very quickly in the oven — so quickly that if you warm up a jelly doughnut and bite into it, the outside may be lukewarm while the jelly is hot enough to burn your esophagus. Indeed,

because the ovens heat so unevenly, all food should be tested carefully when it emerges.

Maley notes the case of a child who heated a cup of soup, stuck his finger in the middle and decided the soup was just right, then drank from the edge of the cup and burned himself. Other accidents occur when the ovens are placed too high to be easily reached by small children. They grope blindly over their heads to pull dishes from the oven, and hot food spills out.

"The microwave oven is what I call an attractive hazard," says Louis Slesin, editor of a health-and-safety newsletter called Microwave News. "On a rainy day a kid could climb up on a stool, put his face to the door and watch something cook for a long time. It's mesmerizing, like watching a fish tank, but his eye will be at the point of maximum microwave leakage. We don't know the threshold for cataract formation — the industry says you need tons of exposure, but some litigation<sup>1</sup> and literature says you don't need much. Children younger than 10 or 12 shouldn't use the oven unsupervised. It's not a toy, it's a sophisticated, serious, adult appliance, and it shouldn't be marketed for kids."

Meanwhile, scientists have been making unpleasant discoveries about the way those pizzas and french fries are packaged. Microwave ovens cook with moist heat, and the culinary results are similar to those obtained by steaming. That's fine for vegetables but terrible for pizza

<sup>1</sup>litigation — lawsuits

*Continued*

crust. So a growing number of products come in "heat susceptible" packaging — a cooking tray or cover made of metalized plastic — which absorbs microwave energy and gets hot enough to brown or crisp the food. At temperatures that may rise to 500 degrees Fahrenheit, however, components of the packaging materials can break down, permitting chemicals to pass into the food. The Food and Drug Administration [FDA] is considering changes in the regulations governing these packages, and has asked manufacturers to submit specific information about the chemicals in use and how they react to high temperatures. But since basic microwave technology is not expected to develop much further, the industry is heavily dependent on what it calls "active packaging" to make up for the shortcomings of moist heat. Robert LaGasse, executive director of the International Microwave Power Institute, a society of teachers, scientists and other professionals in the microwave industry, denies there are any problems with frozen-food packaging; but consumers may wish to be cautious while the FDA investigates.

Similar problems are associated with the use of plastic cling wraps, some of which are made with chemicals that can leak into the food at microwave temperatures. "You want a wrap with PVDC [polyvinylidene chloride], not PVC [polyvinyl chloride]," says LaGasse, but he admits there's no way to tell from the package what you're getting. Barbara Kafka, a food columnist and the author of two popular microwave cookbooks, now advises readers to avoid letting any plastic wrap touch the food while it's

cooking.

Chemical smell: Surprisingly, what would appear to be the most obvious drawback to eating microwavable foods — the flavor — does not appear to have cut into sales. Convenience foods that have been reformulated or especially created for the microwave oven often taste distinctly worse than their conventionally processed counterparts, perhaps because the recipes haven't caught up with the technology. The flavor of oils becomes more prominent in the microwave oven, and the flavors of dried herbs, salt and pepper are intensified, so it's harder to mask the use of second-rate ingredients. But apparently the American palate has so deteriorated under the assault of heavily processed foods that people no longer even expect to taste anything beyond salt, sugar and grease. It's hard to think of another reason why anyone would accept such products as the MicroMagic chocolate milkshake, which has the flat, harsh flavor of poor-quality melted ice cream, or the Pillsbury pizza, with its crust as thin and hard as a stale cracker. But the low point in microwavable foods may be the Betty Crocker MicroRave cake mix. Ready in just four minutes, the results are excruciatingly sweet, with an acrid chemical smell and the texture of a damp sponge.

According to Leonard Lewis, executive editor of *Frozen Food Age*, a trade journal, breakfast dishes are the fastest-growing segment of the market — "In the time it takes to prepare a bowl of oatmeal, people can send their kids off to school with a full meal under their belts." That bowl of oatmeal looks more virtuous than ever, though, compared with some of the breakfast products available.

*Continued*

Pillsbury's blueberry pancakes are greenish and gluey; and Swanson's Great Starts line — including bacon and eggs, and a peculiarly multicultural ham-and-cheese sandwich on a bagel — features flabby bacon, dry eggs and the pervasive taste of the processing ingredients, chiefly salt.

Children may be fussy about food, but that doesn't mean their standards are high. Those 4-year-olds slated to grow up on

do-it-yourself microwave cookery are in for a dismal future. "We are in the process of microwaving away 50,000 years of glorious culinary history in order to satisfy a dubious quest for convenience," writes food expert David Goldbeck in his manual "The Smart Kitchen." The safety issues associated with microwave ovens may be resolved in time, but when a child learns to call a four-minute mess of sodden sweeteners a "cake," something dies.

*Laura Shapiro*  
American journalist



- V. The first draft of Robin's letter to her sister, Susan, who is living in Vancouver, appears below. Read the letter, carefully noting Robin's revisions, and answer questions 39 to 45 from your Questions Booklet.

403 Nalwen Blvd.  
Nalwen, Alberta  
T5J 2T4

January 15, 1991

Dear Susan,

Hi! Just thought I'd drop a short note to see how everyone is in Vancouver. ~~I also hope that everyone is well and healthy.~~ <sup>and to</sup> I congratulate Dave on starting his new job.

As well, <sup>an</sup> I wanted to tell you about <sup>a</sup> this really interesting Article I read the other day. Since your girls <sup>are</sup> are at the age when they say, "I want to do it myself," this article should interest you. The article is about dangers of kids <sup>using</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>ovens</sup> microwaves. It describes several injuries kids can receive when they use <sup>an</sup> ~~the~~ oven unsupervised. Even watching food cook can hurt <sup>their</sup> ~~there~~ eyes.

One of the ~~situations of an~~ <sup>ies</sup> injury <sup>results from</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>known as</sup> what is the jelly-doughnut effect. When anything with sugar is heated in the microwave, the sugar heats very fast. Even though the outside may be <sup>only</sup> warm, the jelly inside is screeching hot and can burn your throat. This is the same for microwave popcorn <sup>in bags</sup> ~~by~~ you can't feel any warmth at all <sup>on</sup> ~~the bag~~ <sup>b</sup>, But when you open it, <sup>up</sup> ~~the steam~~ <sup>steam</sup> is hot enough to cause serious burns to your hands and face.

*Continued*



Another hazard the article <sup>mentions is</sup> ~~mentioned was~~ plastic wrap used to  
cover food when <sup>cooking</sup> ~~putting~~ it in the oven. <sup>During the cooking process,</sup> ~~t/~~ The temperature rises so high  
that chemicals can leak from the wrap into the food. <sup>This probably won't be a hazard for you, though.</sup> I know that Mom  
sent you some microwave cooking containers for Christmas, so you  
probably never use plastic wrap in the microwave.

Last time I visited, I noticed that the girls were keen to take over  
in the kitchen, <sup>so</sup> ~~and~~ I thought I should let you know what some people are  
saying about microwave ovens. I'm not trying to scare you. I care  
about all of you, and thought I'd let you know what I had read. That's  
all for now. I look forward to seeing you when you are in Alberta  
this summer.

Hugs and kisses to the girls.

Love,

Robin



VI. Questions 46 to 52 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

PUTTING FOOD BY

- The last days of the season she lives in a world  
of steam and spice, bends her back  
to the cadence of knife and board  
chopping the coloured flesh of the garden  
5 working long into night.  
The children prop chins on the counter  
chatter in thin hungry voices that fade  
as he comes in and gathers them in his arms  
takes them she knows not where  
10 to eat she dares not imagine what  
but she smiles as they pass from sight  
and turns back to the stained pages spread before her  
sways in the rhythm of her work.  
Deep into night she strains and chops  
15 and ladles, working an alchemy<sup>1</sup> of glass  
that when she falls into bed beside him  
he turns to her pungent body, breathes  
ginger and cloves, vinegar and honey  
on her skin, berries on her lips  
20 and apples beneath her nails;  
that when the children rise from their beds,  
and glide into the kitchen, fisting eyes into sight  
they gather round to gape at the gold, the scarlet,  
the summer-grass green all gleaming  
25 in brass-crowned rows on the counter  
with lids that snap in their dreams all night.
- So it is that deep into winter they taste  
the sweet, edgy fruits of this night,  
and she lifts one by one from the shelves  
30 jars that shine with summer, that pattern  
behind her eyes the shape of a garden she will plant  
and tend the harvest, and she feels only slight regret  
as the jars are emptied  
to rest then in dust and darkness  
35 and wait for the turning of earth  
and her strong hands to turn them to use.

*Rhona McAdam*  
Contemporary Alberta writer

<sup>1</sup>alchemy — magic of transformation

- VII. Questions 53 to 61 in your Questions Booklet are based on this short story by Pearl S. Buck, an American writer who lived in China during the mid part of this century and wrote about her experiences there.

### THE REFUGEES

They walked through the new capital, alien and from a far country, yes, although their own lands were only a few hundred miles perhaps from this very street upon which they now walked. But to them it was very far. Their eyes were the eyes of those who have been taken suddenly and by some unaccountable force from the world they have always known and always thought safe until this time. They who had been accustomed only to country roads and fields, walked now along the proud street of the new capital, their feet treading upon the new concrete sidewalk, and although the street was full of things they had never seen before, so that there were even automobiles and such things of which they had never even heard, still they looked at nothing, but passed as in a dream, seeing nothing.

There were several hundred of them passing at this moment. If they did not look at anything nor at any one, neither did any look at them. The city was full of refugees, many thousands of them, fed after a fashion, clothed somehow, sheltered in mats in great camps outside the city wall. At any hour of the day lines of ragged men and women and a few children could be seen making their way towards the camps, and if any city dweller noticed them it was to think with increased bitterness:

“More refugees — will there never be an end to them? We will all starve trying to feed them even a little!”

But these were no common men and women, no riff-raff from some community always poor and easily starving in a flood time. No, these were men and women of which any nation might have been proud. It could be seen they were all from one region, for they wore garments woven out of the same dark blue cotton stuff, plain and cut in an old-fashioned way, the sleeves long and the coats long and full. The men wore smocked aprons, the smocking done in curious, intricate, beautiful designs. The women had bands of the same plain blue stuff wrapped like kerchiefs about their heads. Both men and women were tall and strong in frame, although the women’s feet were bound. There were a few lads in the throng, a few children sitting in baskets slung upon a pole across the shoulders of their fathers, but there were no young girls, no young infants. Every man and every lad bore a burden on his shoulder. This burden was always bedding, quilts made of the blue cotton stuff and padded. Clothing and bedding were clean and strongly made. On top of every folded quilt with a bit of mat between was an iron cauldron. These cauldrons had doubtless been taken from the earthen ovens of the village when the people saw the time had come when they must move. But in no basket was there a vestige of food, nor was there a trace of food having been cooked in them recently.

This lack of food was confirmed when one looked closely into the faces of the people. In the first glance in the twilight they seemed well enough, but when one looked more closely one saw they were the faces of people starving and moving now in despair to a last hope. They saw nothing of the strange sights of a new city because they were too near death to see anything. No new sight could

*Continued*

move their curiosity. They were men and women who had stayed by their land until starvation drove them forth. Thus they passed unseeing, silent, alien, as those  
45 who know themselves dying are alien to the living.

The last one of this long procession of silent men and women was a little wizened old man. Even he carried a load of two baskets, slung on a pole on his shoulder, the same load of a folded quilt, a cauldron. But there was only one  
50 cauldron. In the other basket it seemed there was but a quilt, extremely ragged and patched, but clean still. Although the load was light it was too much for the old man. It was evident that in usual times he would be beyond the age of work, and was perhaps unaccustomed to such labour in recent years. His breath whistled as he staggered along, and he strained his eyes to watch those who were ahead of him lest he be left behind, and his old wrinkled face was set in a sort of  
55 gasping agony.

Suddenly he could go no more. He set his burden down with great gentleness and sank upon the ground, his head sunk between his knees, his eyes closed, panting desperately. Starved as he was, a little blood rose in dark patches on his cheeks. A ragged vendor selling hot noodles set his stand near, and shouted his  
60 trade cry, and the light from the stand fell on the old man's drooping figure. A man passing stopped and muttered, looking at him.

"I swear I can give no more this day if I am to feed my own even nothing but noodles — but here is this old man. Well, I will give him the bit of silver I earned to-day against to-morrow and trust to to-morrow again. If my own old  
65 father had been alive I would have given it to him."

He fumbled in himself and brought out of his ragged girdle a bit of a silver coin, and after a moment's hesitation and muttering, he added to it a copper penny.

"There, old father," he said with a sort of bitter heartiness, "let me see you eat noodles!"  
70

The old man lifted his head slowly. When he saw the silver he would not put out his hand. He said:

"Sir, I did not beg of you. Sir, we have good land and we have never been starving like this before, having such good land. But this year the river rose and men starve even on good land at such times. Sir, we have no seed left, even.  
75 We have eaten our seed. I told them, we cannot eat the seed. But they were young and hungry and they ate it."

"Take it," said the man, and he dropped the money into the old man's smocked apron and went on his way, sighing.

The vendor prepared his bowl of noodles and called out:  
80

"How many will you eat, old man?"

Then was the old man stirred. He felt eagerly in his apron and when he saw the two coins there, the one copper and the other silver, he said:

"One small bowl is enough."

"Can you eat only one small bowl, then?" asked the vendor, astonished.  
85

"It is not for me," the old man answered.

The vendor stared astonished, but being a simple man he said no more but prepared the bowl, and when it was finished he called out, "Here it is!" And he waited to see who would eat it.

Then the old man rose with a great effort and took the bowl between his  
90 shaking hands and he went to the other basket. There, while the vendor watched, the old man pulled aside the quilt until one could see the shrunken face of a small

*Continued*

boy lying with his eyes fast closed. One would have said the child was dead except that when the old man lifted his head so his mouth could touch the edge of the little bowl he began to swallow feebly until the hot mixture was finished.

95 The old man kept murmuring to him:

“There, my heart — there, my child — ”

“Your grandson?” said the vendor.

“Yes,” said the old man. “The son of my only son. Both my son and his wife were drowned as they worked on our land when the dikes broke.”

100 He covered the child tenderly and then, squatting on his haunches, he ran his tongue carefully around the little bowl and removed the last trace of food. Then, as though he had been fed, he handed the bowl back to the vendor.

“But you have the silver bit!” cried the ragged vendor, yet more astonished when he saw the old man ordered no more.

105 The old man shook his head. “That is for seed,” he replied. “As soon as I saw it, I knew I would buy seed with it. They ate up all the seed, and with what shall the land be sown again?”

110 “If I were not so poor myself,” said the vendor, “I might even have given you a bowl. But to give something to a man who has a bit of silver —” He shook his head puzzled.

“I do not ask you, brother,” said the old man. “Well I know you cannot understand. But if you had land you would know it must be put to seed again or there will be starvation yet another year. The best I can do for this grandson of mine is to buy a little seed for the land — yes, even though I die, and others 115 must plant it, the land must be put to seed.”

He took his load again, his old legs trembling, and straining his eyes down the long, straight street, he staggered on.

*Pearl S. Buck*  
American novelist (1892-1973)



VIII. Questions 62 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this essay.

HOW TO LIVE TO BE 200

Twenty years ago I knew a man called Jiggins, who had the Health Habit. He used to take a cold plunge every morning. He said it opened his pores. After it he took a hot sponge. He said it closed the pores. He got so that he could open and shut his pores at will.

- 5 Jiggins used to stand and breathe at an open window for half an hour before dressing. He said it expanded his lungs. He might, of course, have had it done in a shoe-store with a boot stretcher, but after all it cost him nothing this way, and what is half an hour?

- 10 After he had got his undershirt on, Jiggins used to hitch himself up like a dog in harness and do Sandow<sup>1</sup> exercises. He did them forwards, backwards, and hind-side up.

- He could have got a job as a dog anywhere. He spent all his time at this kind of thing. In his spare time at the office, he used to lie on his stomach on the floor and see if he could lift himself up with his knuckles. If he could, then  
15 he tried some other way until he found one that he couldn't do. Then he would spend the rest of his lunch hour on his stomach, perfectly happy.

In the evenings in his room he used to lift iron bars, cannon-balls, heave dumb-bells, and haul himself up to the ceiling with his teeth. You could hear the thumps half a mile.

- 20 He liked it.

He spent half the night slinging himself around the room. He said it made his brain clear. When he got his brain perfectly clear, he went to bed and slept. As soon as he woke, he began clearing it again.

- Jiggins is dead. He was, of course, a pioneer, but the fact that he dumb-  
25 belled himself to death at an early age does not prevent a whole generation of young men from following in his path.

They are ridden by the Health Mania.

They make themselves a nuisance.

- They get up at impossible hours. They go out in silly little suits and run  
30 Marathon heats before breakfast. They chase around barefoot to get the dew on their feet. They hunt for ozone. They bother about pepsin. They won't eat meat because it has too much nitrogen. They won't eat fruit because it hasn't any. They prefer albumen and starch and nitrogen to huckleberry pie and doughnuts. They won't drink water out of a tap. They won't eat sardines out of a can. They won't  
35 use oysters out of a pail. They won't drink milk out of a glass. They are afraid of alcohol in any shape. Yes, sir, afraid. "Cowards."

And after all their fuss they presently incur some simple old-fashioned illness and die like anybody else.

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>Sandow — Eugen Sandow, "strongman" who first popularized the systematic lifting of weights as exercise



40 Now people of this sort have no chance to attain any great age. They are on the wrong track.

Listen. Do you want to live to be really old, to enjoy a grand, green, exuberant, boastful old age and to make yourself a nuisance to your whole neighbourhood with your reminiscences?

45 Then cut out all this nonsense. Cut it out. Get up in the morning at a sensible hour. The time to get up is when you have to, not before. If your office opens at eleven, get up at ten-thirty. Take your chance on ozone. There isn't any such thing anyway. Or, if there is, you can buy a Thermos bottle full for five cents, and put it on a shelf in your cupboard. If your work begins at seven in the morning, get up at ten minutes to, but don't be liar enough to say that you like  
50 it. It isn't exhilarating, and you know it.

Also, drop all that cold-bath business. You never did it when you were a boy. Don't be a fool now. If you must take a bath (you don't really need to), take it warm. The pleasure of getting out of a cold bed and creeping into a hot bath beats a cold plunge to death. In any case, stop gassing about your tub and  
55 your "shower," as if you were the only man who ever washed.

Now take the question of food.

Eat what you want. Eat lots of it. Yes, eat too much of it. Eat till you can just stagger across the room with it and prop it up against a sofa cushion. Eat everything that you like until you can't eat any more. The only test is, can you  
60 pay for it? If you can't pay for it, don't eat it. And listen — don't worry as to whether your food contains starch, or albumen, or gluten, or nitrogen. If you are a darn fool enough to want these things, go and buy them and eat all you want of them. Go to a laundry and get a bag of starch, and eat your fill of it. Eat it, and take a good long drink of glue after it, and a spoonful of Portland cement.  
65 That will gluten you, good and solid.

If you like nitrogen, go and get a druggist to give you a canful of it at the soda counter, and let you sip it with a straw. Only don't think that you can mix all these things up with your food. There isn't any nitrogen or phosphorus or albumen in ordinary things to eat. In any decent household all that sort of stuff  
70 is washed out in the kitchen sink before the food is put on the table.

And just one word about fresh air and exercise. Don't bother with either of them. Get your room full of good air, then shut up the windows and keep it. It will keep for years. Anyway, don't keep using your lungs all the time. Let them rest. As for exercise, if you have to take it, take it and put up with it. But as  
75 long as you have the price of a hack<sup>2</sup> and can hire other people to play baseball for you and run races and do gymnastics when you sit in the shade and smoke and watch them — great heavens, what more do you want?

*Stephen Leacock*  
Canadian humorist (1869-1944)

<sup>2</sup>hack — taxicab

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